



What Is Scenario Planning and When Might I Use It?

ALC3194: Scenario Planning Toward Climate Change
Adaptation
Module 1

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Wildlife Conservation Society

Module Outline

1. Scenarios-what are they
2. Scenario planning (SP) history & definition
3. Introduce the process
4. An example
5. Purposes and outcomes of an SP process

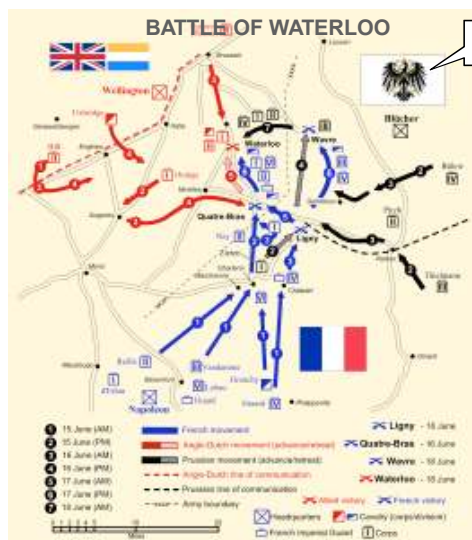
Module Objectives

By the end of the session, you should be able to:

- Differentiate between scenarios and predictions/forecasts
- Describe how scenario planning approaches problems
- Articulate what parts of the process distinguish scenario planning from other methods
- Begin to understand the kinds of uncertainties that SP is suited to address
- Explain the potential uses of scenario planning in a planning/decision context

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Where did scenario planning come from?

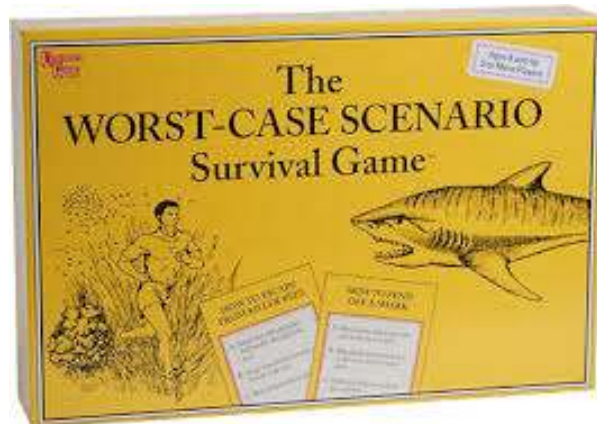


- Military
- **Business**
- Disaster planning

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What are scenarios?

Colloquial uses



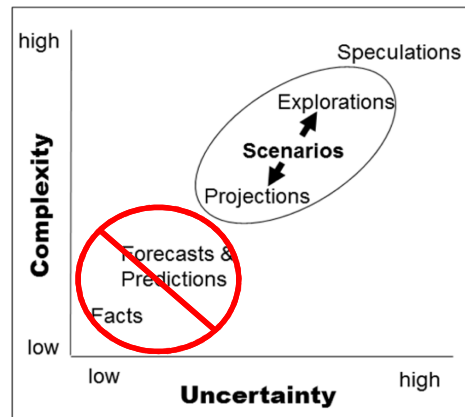
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What are scenarios?

“A scenario is a coherent, internally consistent and plausible description of a possible future state of the world. It is not a forecast; rather, each scenario is one alternative image of how the future can unfold.”—IPCC 2007

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What are scenarios?



Adapted from Zurek and Henrichs, 2007

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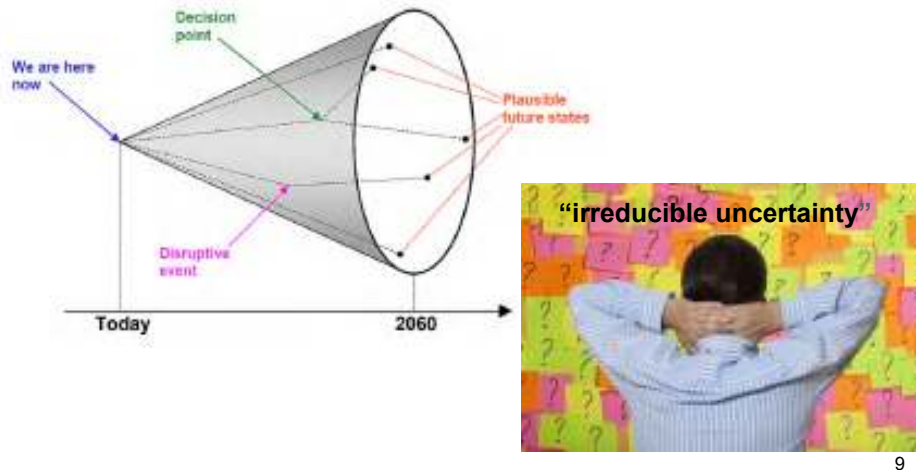
My Maine vacation



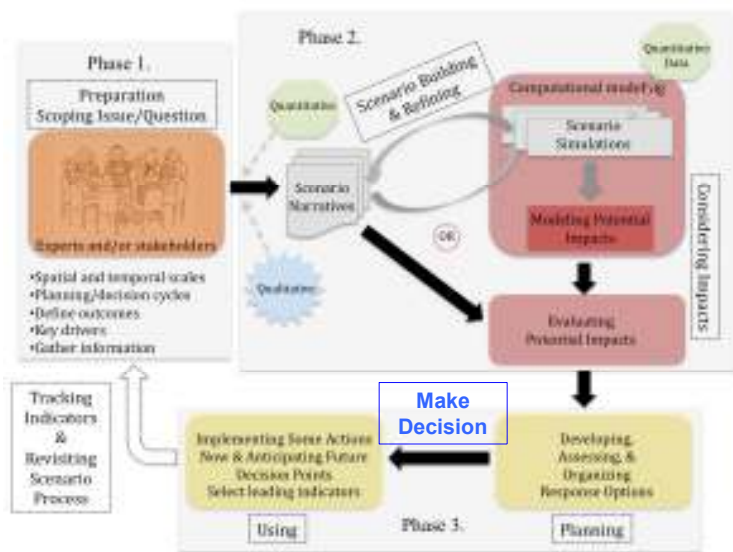
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What is scenario planning?

...Considering multiple, plausible futures in planning and decision making

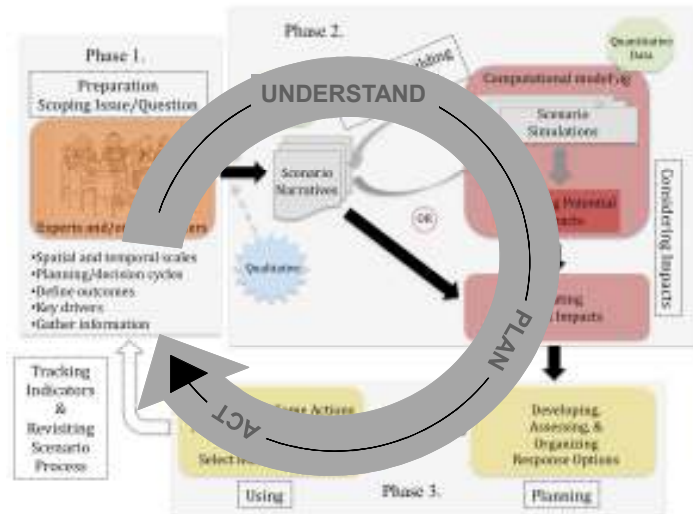


What is scenario planning?



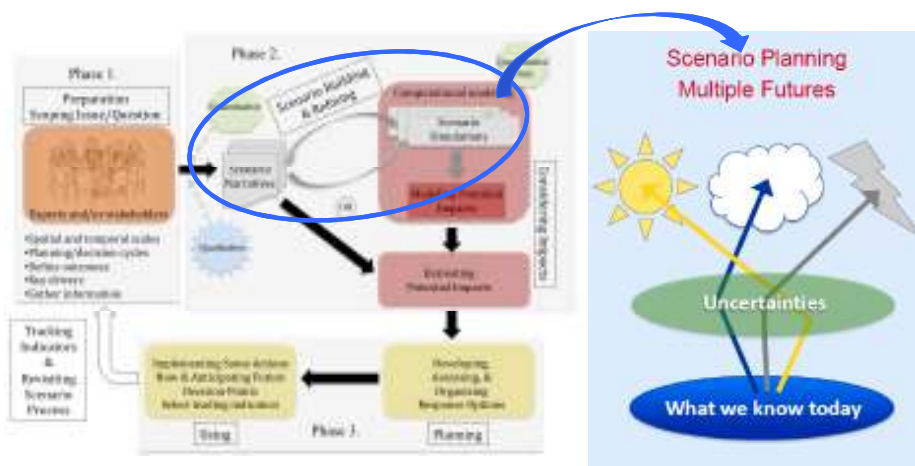
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Much in common with current planning....



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Considering multiple futures...



Considering multiple futures...

"What would we do differently (or the same) if the context is, in fact, changing?"

Scenario planning is largely focused on answering three questions:

- (1) What could happen?
- (2) What would be the impact on our strategies, plans and budgets?
- (3) How should we respond?

<http://www.journalofaccountancy.com/issues/2011/mar/20103483>; Axon et al. 2011

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Alternative Futures for Fire Management: An Example



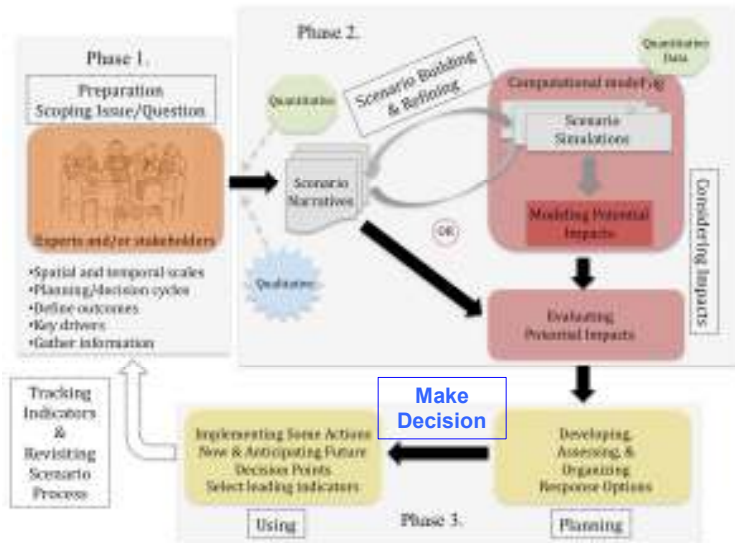
Prescribed fire used in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Photo: J. Lee Young, USFS.



What should we be doing with fire/fuel management to meet future resource goals under such rapidly changing, uncertain conditions?

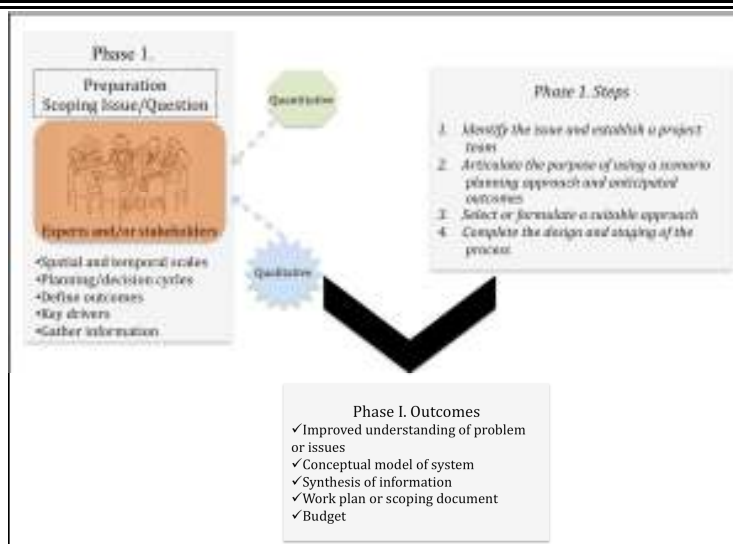
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What is scenario planning?



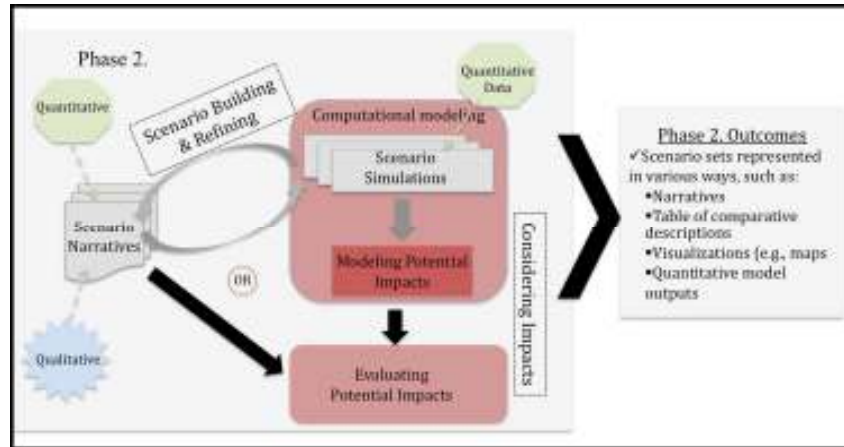
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Phase 1: Preparation



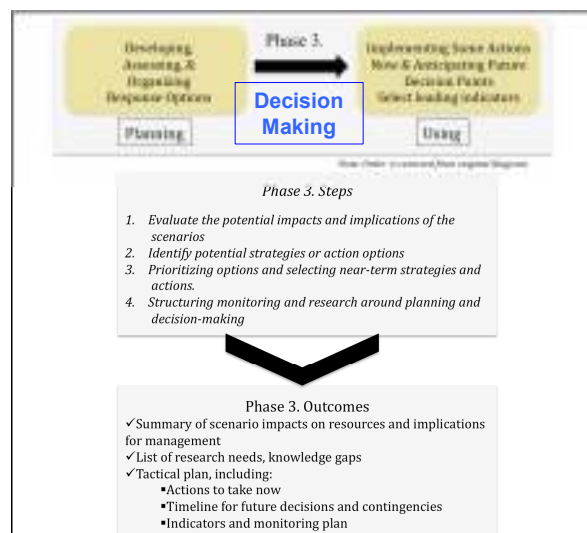
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Phase 2: Scenario Building



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Phase 3: Using Scenarios



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How is scenario planning being used? *...in climate change adaptation*

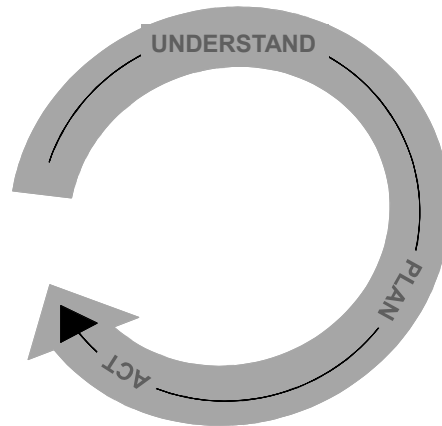


How is scenario planning being used?

Kinds of resource management situations:

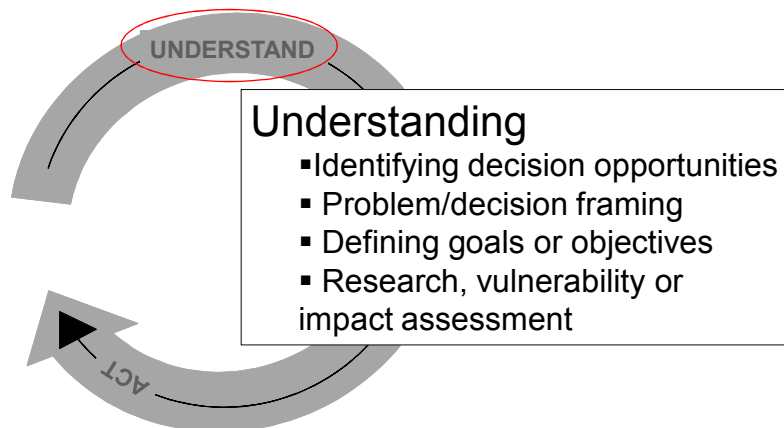
- Exploring (Understanding)
Better understanding the issue
- Planning
Considering what to do now and at some point in the future
- Management focused (Acting)
Making decisions & taking action

How is scenario planning being used?



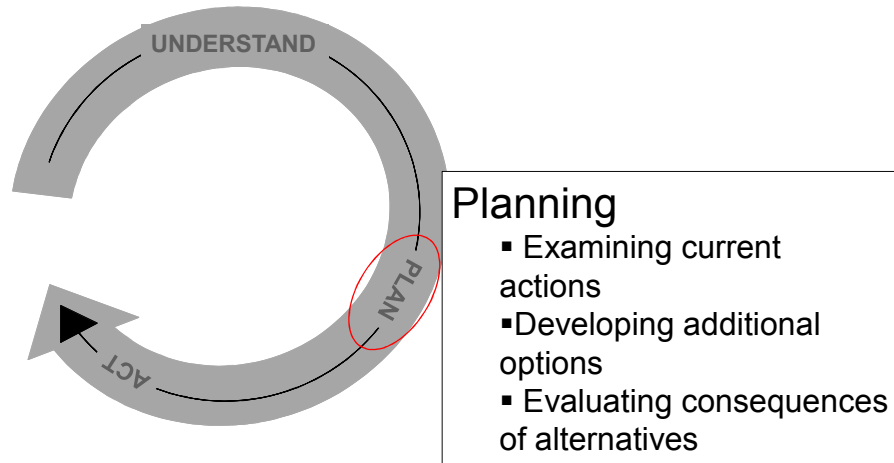
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Building understanding, learning



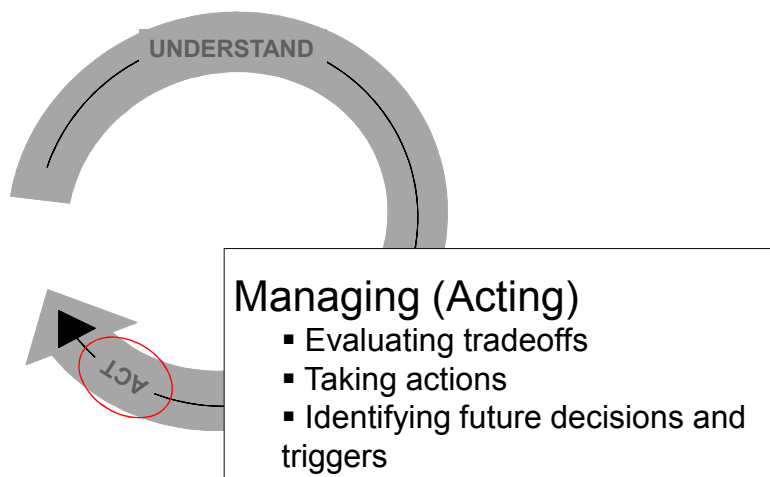
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Considering alternatives



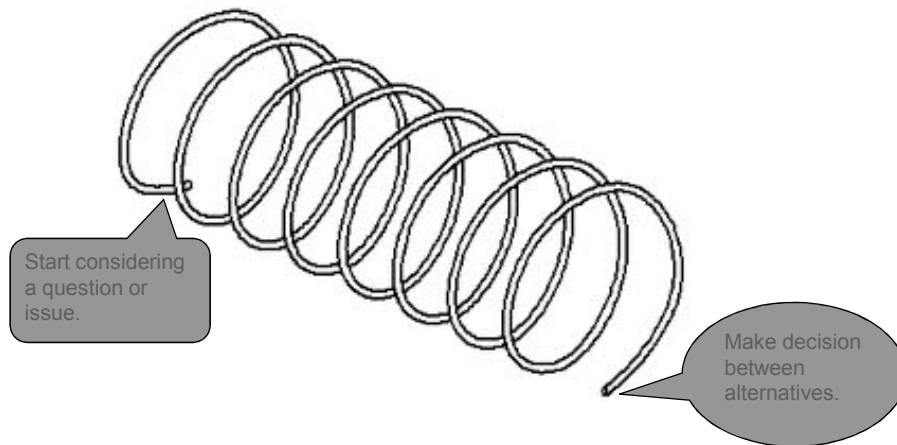
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Making decisions and taking action



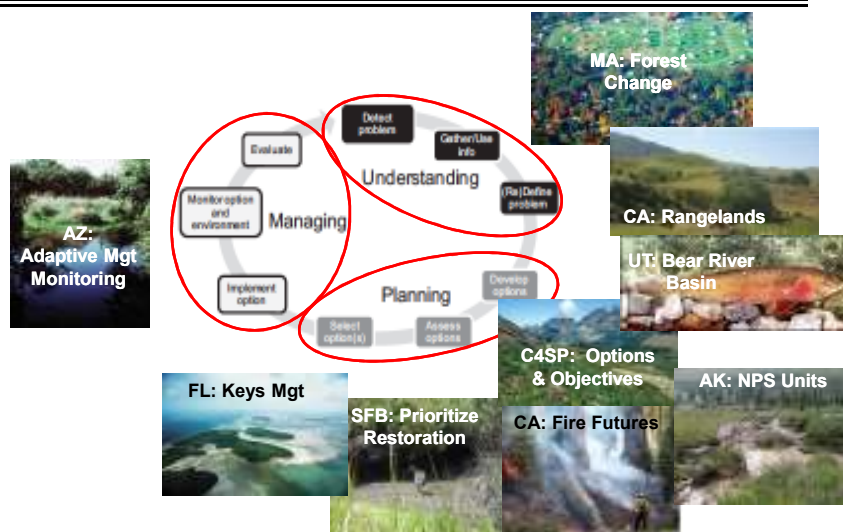
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Stages of decision-making



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Purpose of SP efforts



SP approaches: no two are the same

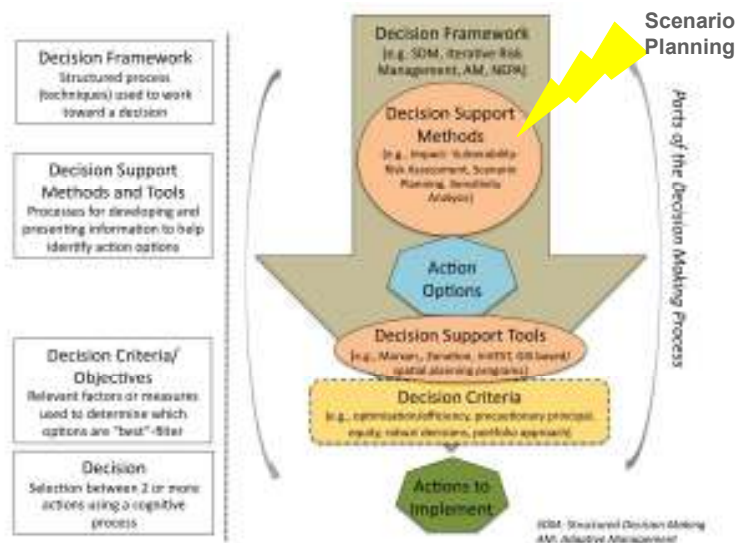


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- Continuum of uncertainty
- Flexible method
- Early stages of application in natural resources

Scenario planning as a decision support method---complementary



Wrap up...

What scenario planning can do:

- ✓ Enable participants to view the system differently & offer new insights (expose assumptions)
- ✓ Broaden perspectives on outcomes of future conditions
- ✓ Foster creativity & the consideration of possibly controversial options
- ✓ Identify options that continue to make sense
- ✓ Develop triggers that align with particular scenarios for quick recognition of a specific trajectory and recommended actions

Wrap up...

What it cannot do: Make a decision

..."scenarios steer us on a middle course between a misguided reliance on prediction and the despairing belief that we can do nothing to envision our future..."---. Morrison & Wilson 1997

Module 1-Take Home

- Scenarios are not predictions---plausible futures and the events that might lead to them
- SP broadens thinking around an issue by examining actions from the perspective of multiple futures
- SP can inform different stages of a decision making process:
 - Understanding and decision/problem framing
 - Identifying alternative actions & assessing consequences
 - Identifying triggers for future decisions
 - Developing monitoring programs
- SP can be complementary with many decision frameworks and other DSMs

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Next up-Problem Framing....

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